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An Appreciation Reception was held for Probate and Family Court Volunteers at the Top of the Park-Park Place Hotel, on Tuesday, Oct 21, 2014.

VIP Volunteers were greeted with a red carpet reception by Judge Melanie Stanton, Grand Traverse County Probate & Family Court, Sonny Wheelock-Vice Chair-County Board of Commissioners, Amanda Flowers-Probate Register, Barbara Donaldson-Senior Probation Officer, and Diane Conklin-Family Court Administrator.

Once upstairs, celebrity guest Elvis Presley, our own Don Kuehlhorn, greeted volunteers and guests. An hors d'oeuvres reception complete with, make your own candy bag from our old fashion candy and sweet and salty candy bar, awaited our Volunteers along with a beautiful autumn view of West Bay.

Sonny Wheelock, Michael Long-GAL, Amanda Flowers, Barb Donaldson, and Judge Stanton, joined Linda Fawcett in recognizing and thanking volunteers for the talents and treasures volunteers bring to our court.

Wonderful prizes were given to those lucky volunteers, whose names were drawn. Many thanks to all of those who made this event possible;

*Meijer, Amical, Sam's Club, Family Fare, STATE Theatre, TCFF, Mary's Kitchen Port, Oleson's Food Store, Gordon Food Service, Tom's Food Market's Inc., Magic Mirror Costume Shop, Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, North Peak Brewing Company, Living Light Massage & Wellness Center, Park Place Hotel, and Bay Supply Marketing.*

*Special thanks to, Lindsey Jordan, Lori Gardyko,  
 Laura, Matt & Ali Shumate*

***As our celebrity guest would say,  
 Thank you. Thank you very much!***



## Happy Birthday!

Betty Leach  
Jeanne Fedorinchik  
Clifford Durga  
Andrea Field  
Roy Bernier  
Frances Butler  
Linda Dittmer  
Bob Brown  
Susan Paul  
Sam Sarns  
Laura Shumate  
Erica Canfield  
Kaitlyn Grangood  
Joyce Bowers

Sue Schmidt  
Nancy Reddy  
Gary Hamp  
Donna Burnside  
Nancy Winogrodzki  
Sharon Rosema  
Marla Hoekwater  
Carla Hickman  
Thad Saur  
Laura Alanson  
Tate Stewart  
Shen Chefalo  
Emily Shaw  
Hilary Hoeflin  
Matt Shumate

Stop in and see us a for a sweet holiday treat! During the month of December we will have goodie bags at the front desk. We would love to see you, and wish you happy holidays!



## Welcome, New Volunteers Fall 2014

On October 14, 2014, Probate & Family Court Volunteer Services wrapped up their Fall Orientation. Judge Melanie Stanton was present for the swearing in of the following volunteers;

***Jordan Ascione, Nancy Bazemore, Julie Howe, Carolyn Klender, Susan McMahon, Kim Morrison, Harmony Odette, Marlin Starkey, Kathy Walsh-Sinnard, and Judy Zrimec***

Many thanks to Judge Stanton, Amanda Flowers-Probate, Laura Shumate-Learning Partners, Kate Walters- Juvenile Division, Jill Kimball-Lakeview Counseling, Dave Speirs and Ruth Bay, our Citizens in Action Panel. Together they presented an interesting and informative overview of our court, our volunteer services, and how citizen volunteers can make a difference in our community.

Starlight fills our room tonight, diamonds twinkling, a magnificent sight. Volunteers are *diamonds*, all of you, brilliant light shines, from the work you do.

New life emerges from the hearts that are here,  
With the mission to serve throughout the year.

Volunteers are viewed as diamonds of grace,  
You make our community a compassionate place.

We love this mission we share as one,

We work as partners until the job is done,

You will never know how grateful we are,

You bring light to the darkness just like a star.

Committed to excellence, we rejoice on this day,

Outstanding outcome, you lead the way.

Keep on shining diamonds! Continue to lead the way.

**By Barb Donaldson**



Learning Partners are off and rolling in the new school year! Several Volunteers are continuing with their students, while others are just getting to meet and get started. November always brings new student referrals for support as the students have settled-in to school routines and grades have been posted! If you might be interested in working with an elementary school-aged student to help him during the school day, please let us know!

We plan to attend a performance at the Old Town Playhouse in early December. This positive, out of classroom learning opportunity is one of several events planned for Learning Partner Students to attend with their Learning Partner Volunteer. Most of our events include the student's immediate family and present a wonderful opportunity to explore interests and activities, all while having fun as a family. The events also give Learning Partner Volunteers an opportunity to meet and connect with the family, building more support for the student.

Watch for photos and reports in future editions of this newsletter!



On Tues., **November 18th**, from 4-6 p.m., our guest, Nikki Dunwiddie-Supervisor, Catholic Charities, will discuss the Family Reunification Program and how it assists families when children are returned home from care. We will also review hi-lights from the Michigan CASA conference and share case studies.



At our **December 16**, CASA meeting we will begin planning for 2015. In doing so, look ahead to some possible community outreach in which we may be involved.

Location to be announced.

Tell your friends that the next 30+ hour training for CASA volunteers will begin, **March 2015**.

Many thanks to the following CASA's who donated items for our raffle basket, at this year's CASA conference;

**Nancy Giles, Lisa Niergarth, Katy Ramsdell, Nancy Winodgrodzki, Lindsey Jordan and Linda Fawcett**

It was a privilege to hear, Jake Dekker-Author of "One Kid at a Time", speak at this years MI CASA Conference.

His critically acclaimed story of his 10-year-old son's adoption from foster care, received near universal praise. His writing has been featured in many local and national news outlets and he regularly advocates for child welfare and foster care reform. For more information about Jake's books and his appearances, please visit [www.jakedekker.com](http://www.jakedekker.com)





During our Recognition Event, we had a number of volunteers attending with 5 years or more of service to Probate & Family Court. Congratulations and many thank to:

***Sue Schmidt, Etta Rajkovich, Carol Valko, Jim Valko, Jeanne Fedorinchik, Kathy Ann Blunch, Don Kuehlhorn, Patti Marar, Elliot Morrison, Karen Grant, Val Doman, Nancy Fraser, Beth Rideout, Wanda Anstine, Jim Doman, Ed Thoma, Al Wilkins, Barb Wilkins, John Roeser, Donna Thoma, Sue Soderberg, Karri Walter, Robin Komrska, Florence Morrison, and Sue Paul.***



*Thank you,  
Thank you, very much!*



# GRAND TRAVERSE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL



The fall colors are beginning to fade and the blue-grey of the bare trees contrasts with the dark green of conifers which will soon be graced with snow. My count-down to Christmas clock is showing less than 60 days to the big day.

With the holidays rapidly approaching GTALC is preparing for its participation in the annual Children's Book Festival at the Traverse City Opera House on November 8th, from 9:00 to noon. GTALC is also preparing for its annual appeal campaign which starts in mid-November.

Ongoing activities for the Council include the launching of the business outreach campaign which targets human resource departments alerting them to the services that GTALC can offer employees who could benefit from literacy training.

The Council continues to work with the Probate and Family Courts supporting parents who are interested in improving their reading skills.

The long standing partnership between GTALC and Michigan Works! has been reviewed and improved with attention to communication between Michigan Works! and the Council.

Lastly, with a new tracking system in place the Council volunteers have a new tool to use in the process of matching and oversight of tutor-student matches and ongoing tutorial activity.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Thompson, President



## **Guardians & Conservator's**

A helpful hint from Probate Court. Probate Court Administrative Office has changed their instruction sheets, that they give out to new conservator's.

Those changes are; bank statements must include the bank's name or logo, the person's name and the person's account number.

**We need  
you!**



Our Truancy Program and Citizen's Panel are in need of facilitator's/panel members.

Please give us a call, and we would be happy to give you more information!





**VOLUNTEERS IN  
PREVENTION/PROBATION**

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE COURT

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

MELANIE D. STANTON, PROBATE & FAMILY COURT JUDGE

280 Washington St., Suite B 150, Traverse City, MI 49684

231-922-4827



Our office will be closed for the holidays on the following dates:  
*Nov. 11th, 27th, and 28th, Dec. 24th, 25th, 31st and Jan. 1st. Thank you!*

PRE-SORT STD.

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TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684

PERMIT NO. 229

Or Current Resident

\*All meeting are held at the Volunteer Services office unless otherwise mentioned.

### Learning Partners

1st Tuesday-4:00-5:00 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 4th, 2014

Tuesday, Dec. 2nd, 2014



### CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)- See pg. 3

3rd Tuesday- 4:00-6:00 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 18th, 2014

Tuesday, Dec. 16th, 2014 (see pg.3)



### Literacy Council

3rd Wednesday-6:00 pm

Traverse Area District Library

Wednesday, Nov. 19th, 2014

Wednesday, Dec. (no meeting)

